

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T  
NUMBER 1 ON BOB HOPE RD MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 545-9400  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 87-2017 A  
DATE JUL/28/87

TAYLOR, MELANIE (REMAINS, UNKNOWN)  
26 BLACK FEMALE DOB NOV/12/60  
1251 N.W. 61 STREET, MIAMI FLORIDA

PLACE OF DEATH: 1430 N.W. 2ND AVE., (BACK PORCH)  
TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 12:15 PM JUL/28/87

INVESTIGATING AGENCY: MIAMI #2091499 L/VINCENT

INCIDENT LOCATION: 1430 N.W. 2ND AVE., (BACK PORCH)  
JUL/28/87 UNK. SCENE M.E. BRUCE ALLEN HYMA, M.D.

HISTORY:

GS

ACCORDING TO INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: ON JULY 28TH AT APPROX.  
12:15 P.M. DECEDENT WAS FOUND LYING ON THE BACK PORCH AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS.  
SHE WAS FOUND NUDE FROM THE WAIST DOWN WITH NO VISIBLE TRAUMA NOTED.

THE DECEASED HAD NO IDENTIFICATION ON HER PERSON WHEN FOUND, AND WAS  
SUBSEQUENTLY IDENTIFIED BY FAMILY MEMBERS. SHE HAD DINNER WITH HER FAMILY ON  
SUNDAY, JULY 26, 1987 AND LAST SEEN BY HER BROTHER ON MONDAY, JULY 27, 1987.  
PER THE BROTHER, SHE IS THE MOTHER OF FIVE CHILDREN, IS A KNOWN COCAINE AND  
ALCOHOL ABUSER, HAS HAD MULTIPLE ARRESTS FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT AND WAS RE-  
LEASED FROM JAIL JULY 20, 1987.

CAUSE OF DEATH: ASPHYXIA. AMENDED BY JOSEPH H. DAVIS, M. D., CHIEF MEDICAL  
EXAMINER- 6/19/89-DJM.

MANNER: HOMICIDE DATE AUTOPSY JUL/29/87 BY BRUCE ALLEN HYMA, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

GS

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T  
1050 N.W. 19TH STREET MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 549-7337  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

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CAUSE OF DEATH: COCAINE TOXICITY. REFILED: 8/21/87-DJM.

MANNER: ACCIDENT DATE AUTOPSY JUL/29/87 BY BRUCE ALLEN HYMA, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

GS

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT

CLASSIFICATION OF PENDING CASE

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED BY A MEDICAL EXAMINER WHEN A PENDING CASE IS TO BE CLASSIFIED. MAKE CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN APPROVAL BY EITHER THE CHIEF OR DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER BEFORE COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMS AND CERTIFICATES REQUIRED BY THE STATE.)

M.E. Case # 872017

Name (if known) Melanie Taylor.

Cause of Death:  
(Item 24)

Due to: Cocaine Toxicity.

Due to:

Contributory Cause:

Manner of Death:  
(Item 27a)

Accident.

How Incident Occurred:  
(Item 27d)

Dec'd ingested cocaine

Rationale for Classification:

This 26 year old black female, who is a known Cocaine abuser, was found on the back porch of a known "Crack" house. She was naked from the waist down. A Kerchief was tied loosely in an overhand knot around her neck. Her neck was free of any injury. Her lip and tongue have recent superficial lacerations. The body is otherwise free of trauma.

Autopsy findings consist of hemorrhagic pulmonary edema, visceral congestion and <sup>accelerated</sup> internal decomposition suggesting terminal hyperthermia. Analysis of heart blood revealed cocaine  $\leq 0.05 \text{ mg/L}$ . Brain contained  $0.1 \text{ mg/L}$  cocaine.

Bruce A. Lyman MD.  
Medical Examiner

8 13 87  
M - D - Y  
Date

Approved by [Signature]

8 13 87  
M - D - Y  
Date

Over

Since this woman has no evidence of a traumatic  
death it is reasonable to conclude that she  
died as a result of cocaine toxicity.

Bruce A. Hyman  
8/13/87

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T  
1050 N.W. 19TH STREET MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 549-7337  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

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JUL/28/87 12:15 PM SCENE M.E. BRUCE ALLEN HYMA, M.D.

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LEASED FROM JAIL JULY 20, 1987.

CAUSE OF DEATH: PENDING TOXICOLOGY.

MANNER: UNCLASSIFIED DATE AUTOPSY JUL/29/87 BY BRUCE ALLEN HYMA, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

GS

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7/30/87  
mo. day yr.

1040 Am.  
time

872017  
M.E. Case #

MPD

last seen alive Friday 7/25/87.  
mother of five children.  
grandmother has custody  
known cocaine user and alcoholic.  
multiple arrests for aggravated assault.  
recently released from jail 7/20/87.

- 
- found in full rigor.
  - money matches around
  - condom package on balcony.

1st seen 7/30/87.

Name...TAYLOR, .Melanie.....Case No. 87-2017

SCENE INVESTIGATION

DATE: July 28, 1987  
LOCATION: NW 2nd Avenue & 14 Terr.  
TIME ARRIVED AT SCENE: 1:55 PM  
POLICE AGENCY: Miami Police Dept.  
LEAD INVESTIGATOR: Detective Vincent  
INITIAL INFORMATION:

The body of an unknown black adult female was found on the back porch of a Crack House. Neighbors said they heard or saw nothing out of the ordinary in the last 24 hours.

OBSERVATIONS OF SURROUNDINGS:

The body is found on the back porch of an abandoned two story dwelling. This building is known in the neighborhood as a Crack Cocaine House. Drug paraphernalia including aluminum foil, syringes and needles, matches, and burned bottle caps are all over the premises.

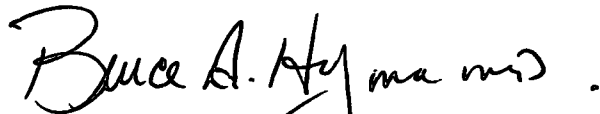
OBSERVATIONS OF VICTIM(s):

The victim lies supine outdoors on the back porch of the second story. She is clad in a black T-shirt, a white bra and a white kerchief which is loosely tied around her neck. Her T-shirt is pulled up along with her bra exposing part of her right breast. She is nude from the waist down. Her bulbar and palpebral conjunctivae are free of petechiae. On her inner lower lip and her tongue are multiple superficial lacerations. Brown tenacious mucus is running from her nose.

SCENE IMPRESSION (INCLUDING PROBABLE CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH):

Cocaine overdose.

NOTE: The foregoing is of a speculative nature and subject to modification pending additional information and investigation.

  
Bruce A. Hyma, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner

BAH:rf

**METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY**

Office of the Medical Examiner

**INVESTIGATION REPORT**

Police Case No. 2091499L

NAME OF THE DECEASED: UNKNOWN <sup>(POSSIBLE)</sup> B/P MELONY TAYLOR Age UNK Race B Sex F

Address UNKNOWN <sup>(Melanie)</sup> Date of Birth UNK

Social Security No. X Occupation X Employer X

Place of Death 1430 NW 2 Ave (Upstairs Balcony)

Death Occurred UNK. 1987 M. in the presence of X

or Found Dead 7-28-87 12:15 P. M. by X

Identified by X Address X

Date/Time Viewed by Investigator 7-28-87 12:35 P. M. Medical Examiner at Scene Dr. Wetli

**HISTORY:** (What happened just prior to death and when was victim last seen alive?)

Victim found on balcony lying on back  
nude from the waist down  
No other information at this time

Possible manner of death UNC/ASS.

If Violent Death: Date/Time of Incident \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_ M. Weapon/Cal. \_\_\_\_\_

Exact Location/Address of Incident \_\_\_\_\_ At work \_\_\_\_\_  
(Specify Street, Parking Lot, Bar etc)

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION:** Clothing Blk Blouse

Position/Location of Body: lying on back on porch

Lividity: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Consistent \_\_\_\_\_ Body Heat: Warm: ✓ Cool \_\_\_\_\_ Cold \_\_\_\_\_

Rigor Mortis: None \_\_\_\_\_ Slight \_\_\_\_\_ Full ✓ Decomposition: None ✓ Slight \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced \_\_\_\_\_

Trauma: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No ✓ Describe \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF DOCTORS/HOSPITALS who attended deceased during life: UNKNOWN

NAME OF NEXT OF KIN: UNKNOWN Relation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Notified: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No ✓

Valuables and Disposition None Medication to M.E.: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Investigating Agency MPD Report Submitted by Sgt S. Vinson Date: 7-28-87 2:00 P.



June 0817467

**M.E. Case No.** 87-2017 A.

I hereby identify the body viewed by me at the **MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT**, in the presence of

on July 28, 1987 at 4:50 PM.  
Mon Day Yr.

as that of MELANIE TAYLOR 87-2017

Signature Alphonse Smith

Alphonzo Merritt  
Address 1251 NW 61st St., # 1, Miami, Fla. 33147

Tel. No. (305) 696-8887

Relationship	Step-father	Known since she was a child.
--------------	-------------	------------------------------

I.D. Used (Dr. Lic., Voter Registr.)

FDL # M630-000-47-292.

IDENTIFICATION MADE BY VIEWING PHOTOS OF THE DECEASED. ip

**DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT**  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

**CASE INFORMATION**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
mo.      day      yr.

\_\_\_\_\_ time

\_\_\_\_\_ M.E. Case #

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7/29/87  
mo. day yr.

10<sup>30</sup> AM  
time

872017  
M.E. Case #

C.O.D. pending for.  
MOD. unclass -

1 Sigma 7/29/87

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7/31/87  
mo. day yr.

3:35 pm.  
time

872017  
M.E. Case #

Lynn Dukes. from Miami Herald. -  
How much Cocaine in the brain?  
Assay not completed. Cocaine is  
present. qualitatively.

1 Dyma 7/31/87

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7/31/87  
mo. day yr.

1130 Am.  
time

87-2017.  
M.E. Case #

Lynn Duke from Miami Herald.  
Called inquiring about COD and  
M.O.D. Informed her toxicology  
is still in progress. COD is not  
strangulation!

B. Lyman 7/31/87

CASE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ MEDICAL EXAMINER

DADE COUNTY  
1050 N.W. 19th Street  
Miami, Florida 33136

## CASE INFORMATION

7/28/87

4:00 pm

Inst,  
Med Recs.  
6313

Inst # 0817467,

Requested - DFM

- Chart pulled for Dr. Botwin - medical  
Research - will call back.

DFM

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7/28/87  
mo. day yr.

4:30 P.M.  
time

                      
M.E. Case #

Rec'd

RE:

Andrew  
MPD

Wants to be notified  
once the family makes the  
positive I.D. at M.E. office  
MPD # 549-6530

*Abangelu*



DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7 28 87  
mo. day yr.

7:48 PM  
time

87-2017  
M.E. Case #

RE: REMAINS, UNKNOWN

In office  
STEP FATHER  
BROTHER

KNOWN AS MELANIE TAYLOR  
DOB 11/12/60  
MOTHER - ROIE

ALFONZO MERRITT  
1251 NW 61 St. ST. #1  
MIAMI, FLA. 33147

696 - 8887

STEP FATHER - KNOWN SINCE ~~1974~~ <sup>2 YEARS</sup>

M620-000-47-292

Resident at: NW. 55 St. + 2nd Ave.

2nd dinner with them on Sunday  
Seen by her brother on Monday 7/27/87

No medical history  
Used drugs.

*[Signature]*

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7-28-87  
mo. day yr.

5:25 p.m  
time

87-2017  
M.E. Case #

To  
Det  
Andrew -

Notified of Legal I.D.

Gwen S.

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7 28 87  
mo. day yr.

1:15 PM  
time

M.E. Case #

DET. ANDREO  
MPD.

Needs M.E. to respond  
in about 20 minutes.

NW. 2ND AVENUE + 14<sup>th</sup> TERRACE

OO VS HOMICIDE

Abandoned building, circumstances  
very similar to yesterday metro room  
lady.

Dr. Wetli advised -

evw + BAH responded - 1:42 PM

Wagon  
Requested  
2:19 PM  
Kevin

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 7/28/87  
mo. day yr.

2:15 PM  
time

M.E. Case # \_\_\_\_\_

MPD  
MS;  
Davis

Requesting M.E. Wagon

1430 NW 2 Ave

unclassified

Myda

Requested Wagon

Called  
945-8899

Wagon  
2:19 PM  
RIB

Myda

# PROPERTY RECEIPT

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19th Street  
Miami, Florida 33175  
(305) 549-7337

M.E. CASE # 87-2017  
MEDICAL EXAMINER Hyma

(IF NOT KNOWN, USE UNK)

DECEDENT'S NAME: UNK

AGE \_\_\_\_\_ RACE B SEX F TYPE OF CASE \_\_\_\_\_

POLICE AGENCY: MPD POLICE CASE # \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM NO.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION (Itemize currency by denomination)
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>RAPE KIT</u>

I hereby acknowledge that the above list represents all the property impounded by me in the official performance of my duty as a Medical Examiner, District 11.

BRUCE HYMA MD Bruce Hyma MD  
Print Sign  
DATE / TIME OBTAINED: 7 28 87 4:15 pm  
MO. DAY YR. TIME AM/PM.

I hereby acknowledge that the above list represents all property received by/from the Medical Examiner Department.

M.E. Courier: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Sign

DATE / TIME OBTAINED: \_\_\_\_\_  
M D Y TIME AM/PM.

Receiving Party: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Sign Agency

Date & Time Released: \_\_\_\_\_  
MO. DAY YR. TIME AM/PM.

RECEIVED BY	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED

**POITIER FUNERAL HOME, INC.**

2300 NORTHWEST 62ND STREET  
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33147  
(305) 638-5030 OR 638-5031

BERNARD C. POITIER, SR. - ALFONSO M. RICHARDSON, SR.  
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

**AUTHORIZATION**

*M.F.*

I hereby designate the above-named funeral establishment to take charge of funeral arrangements for: MELAINE TAYLOR, and I authorize the release and removal of the remains to said funeral establishment for the purpose of embalming.

I represent that I am the next of kin, or am acting as an authorized agent for the next of kin.

Signed: Eddie B. Merritt  
Relationship: MOTHER

Co-Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS:

DATE:

✓ Alfonso Merritt 7-30-87

**FOR VERBAL (TELEPHONE) AUTHORIZATION:**

Authorization from \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Received by \_\_\_\_\_

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER  
MIAMI, FLORIDA

DECEASED'S VALUABLES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY RECORD

NAME OF DECEASED THANK TAYLOR, MELANIE M.E. CASE NO. 87-2017

TIME 3.10 pm DATE 7-28-87

AGE 4 RACE B SEX F HEIGHT 4-10

WEIGHT (with clothes) \_\_\_\_\_ (without clothes) 123 (with wet clothes) \_\_\_\_\_

FINGERPRINTED: YES NO \_\_\_\_\_

MALE CLOTHES FEMALE

SHOES \_\_\_\_\_ SOCKS \_\_\_\_\_ SHOES \_\_\_\_\_ STOCKINGS \_\_\_\_\_ SOCKS \_\_\_\_\_

JACKET \_\_\_\_\_ SWEATER \_\_\_\_\_ COAT \_\_\_\_\_ SWEATER \_\_\_\_\_ JACKET \_\_\_\_\_

TIE \_\_\_\_\_ SHIRT \_\_\_\_\_ DRESS \_\_\_\_\_ BLOUSE ✓ SKIRT \_\_\_\_\_

TROUSERS \_\_\_\_\_ SHORTS \_\_\_\_\_ BELT \_\_\_\_\_ SHORTS \_\_\_\_\_ SLACKS \_\_\_\_\_

UNDERSHIRT \_\_\_\_\_ T SHIRT \_\_\_\_\_ UNDERSHORTS \_\_\_\_\_ SLIP \_\_\_\_\_ PANTIES \_\_\_\_\_ CORSET \_\_\_\_\_ BRA \_\_\_\_\_

PAJAMAS \_\_\_\_\_ PAJAMAS \_\_\_\_\_ GOWN \_\_\_\_\_

DENTURES: U. \_\_\_\_\_ L. \_\_\_\_\_ TRUSS \_\_\_\_\_ DENTURES: U. \_\_\_\_\_ L. \_\_\_\_\_

MISCELLANEOUS \_\_\_\_\_ MISCELLANEOUS \_\_\_\_\_

VALUABLES

(List all money, jewelry, keys, personal papers & other valuables)

None

RECEIVED BY Sequeira MORGUE ATTENDANT WITNESS [Signature]

REMOVED FROM ME OFFICE BY [Signature]

BODY [Signature] REPRESENTING [Signature] DATE 7-30-87 TIME 9:30 pm

CLOTHES \_\_\_\_\_ REPRESENTING \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

VALUABLES \_\_\_\_\_ REPRESENTING \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

Dew

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
PHONE (305) 545-2400 FAX (305) 545-2418**

**INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**M.E. Case #: 87-2017**

**DATE: JUL/28/1987**

**TYPE: A**

**TAYLOR, MELANIE (AKA)**

**SS#:**

**26 YEAR(S)**

**BLACK**

**FEMALE**

**D.O.B. NOV/12/1960**

**1251 N.W. 61 STREET, MIAMI FLORIDA**

**PLACE OF DEATH: 1430 N.W. 2ND AVE., (BACK PORCH)**

**TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 12:15 PM JUL/28/1987**

**INVESTIGATING AGENCY: CITY OF MIAMI 2091499 L/**

**INCIDENT LOCATION: 1430 N.W. 2ND AVE., (BACK PORCH)**

**JUL/28/1987**

**HYMA, BRUCE A., M.D.**

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---

**CAUSE OF DEATH: ASPHYXIA. AMENDED BY JOSEPH H. DAVIS, M. D., CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER- 6/19/89-DJM.**

**MANNER: HOMICIDE  
MORTUARY: POITIER**

**AUTOPSY**

**JUL/29/1987**

**DOCTOR: HYMA, BRUCE A., M.D.**

**INVESTIGATOR: GS**

**THIS REPORT MAY CONTAIN NON-VERIFIED INFORMATION  
AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**



# Deaths of 19 Prostitutes Pose a Mystery in Miami

By JEFFREY SCHMALZ

Special to The New York Times

MIAMI, June 3 — The circumstances suggest foul play. The bodies of all 19 women were found in the same section of the city in outside areas like fields, or they were behind buildings. Yet medical examiners said they had found no wounds on the bodies, no bruises, no scratches, no needle marks. Nothing.

For months officials here have been debating the deaths, which occurred over the last two and a half years. One assistant medical examiner speculated that the women, who the police say were prostitutes, may have died from the combined stimulation of sex and crack.

This week, Dade County's Medical Examiner, Dr. Joseph H. Davis, issued his formal determination: the women were murdered. He did not address whether the victims had been killed by the same person, but the announcement raised the specter of a serial killer preying on local prostitutes.

Dr. Davis said a re-examination of photographs and autopsy reports had revealed that pressure had been applied to the victims' necks or mouths. Aiding the medical examiner in his evaluation was Dr. Richard Souviron, an expert in forensic dentistry whose findings helped convict the serial killer Ted Bundy.

"One might question," Dr. Davis wrote, "how such deliberate deaths could occur in the absence of obvious injury patterns that we see in most homicidal strangulations and suffocations. It is not at all difficult to inflict enough neck pressure to result in helplessness and loss of consciousness within seconds."

Dr. Davis acknowledged that the physical evidence of murder was "subtle." And in defense of his finding, he in-



Associated Press

Dr. Joseph H. Davis, Dade County Medical Examiner, who has determined that 19 women found dead in Miami in similar positions and with no signs of violence were murdered.

## Are they subtle murders or reactions from sex and crack?

cluded a discourse about how a medical examiner's conclusions were often based not on the body itself but on the circumstances in which it was found.

All the dead women, who ranged in age from 14 years old to 32, were black, except one, who was Hispanic. Most were crack users, the police said. All were found on their backs, with either their dresses pulled up or their pants pulled down; their legs were spread.

"It is my considered conclusion," Dr. Davis wrote, "that the repetitive pattern of body position, location and scene circumstances constitutes a reasonable conclusion as to manner of death — homicide."

But rather than create alarm, the Medical Examiner's report has been received warily. The Miami Herald did not even print the article about it on its front page. And police officials, while saying they are investigating the cases as murders, say they are not convinced that the deaths were really homicides.

"We're not discounting that there could be other explanations," said John

Farrell, chief of detectives of Metro-Dade Police Department. "The motivation of Dr. Davis, I think was under some pressure in pressurized to come up with a reason."

### Skepticism About Report

Police officers say it is difficult to believe that at least some of the victims would not have struggled with their killer. They say serial killers of prostitutes tend to be the most vicious murderers of all, slashing or other mutilating their victims, not leaving them unscarred.

The police say they have not abandoned the theory that the women died from the combined stimulation of sex and crack. While they acknowledge that the levels of cocaine found in the victims were insufficient for an overdose, they say their experience with crack is that a small amount can cause fatal psychotic fits.

But the police also acknowledge holes in the cocaine theory. Two times had no cocaine in their bodies. And with the exception of one, all deaths have occurred in the same area directly north of midtown. If the deaths were indeed linked to sex and crack, why would they be limited to that section?

### No Comment on Clues

In interviews some leading medical examiners elsewhere in the country cautioned that while they were familiar with the specifics of Miami deaths, they thought Dr. Davis' conclusions were plausible. The examiners said they were not seeing a rash of similar prostitute deaths in their cities and this led them to conclude that the sex-cocaine theory was probably inaccurate.

As for there being virtually no signs of trauma on the victims' bodies, Charles Hirsch, the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, said: "It is not unusual for there to be no signs. It is perfectly consistent with a forensic evaluation of cases like this to consider history and circumstances. Sometimes that's about all you have to go on."

The police would not comment on what physical evidence had been found at the death scenes — whether, for example, they had found hairs from a killer or fingerprints. They have questioned at least two men but have brought charges.

Meanwhile, police officers have been warning black prostitutes to be wary. They say that, in addition to the deaths, crack use has brought about an overall increase in brutality against prostitutes.

The prostitutes' reaction has been fatalistic.

Chief Farrell said: "They tell us you're not a user, you don't understand the high. They tell us to leave them alone."

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
(305) 545-2400

# Rapist questioned in 17 deaths

Tuesday, May 16, 1989 / The Miami Herald 3B

## Rapist is suspect in deaths case

### SUSPECT / from 1B

found near where 24-year-old Brenda Hernandez was killed with a blunt object at Northwest 46th Street and 23rd Avenue.

Police took him into custody after he gave "false information" about his name and was found to be carrying a crack pipe in his pocket, they said.

Within a few hours of his arrest, Williams also was charged with the March rape and robbery of a prostitute. Another victim later identified the convict in a photo lineup as the man who a month earlier pinned her in a choke hold and then dragged her to an open field where he raped her.

Williams is being arraigned in those two rape cases this morning. He is being held without bail at the Dade County Stockade.

Meanwhile, Metro and Miami police are investigating Williams' possible role in the 17 deaths that began in 1986. Almost all of the victims were found lying on their backs, partially nude and in open fields or abandoned houses. Their blood showed traces of cocaine, and crack paraphernalia was found nearby.

say."

Records show Williams served only four months of that sentence in the stockade. He was released in time for Christmas 1986.

Five months later, he was in trouble again.

Miami police arrested him in May 1987 after a woman reported she had been beaten on her legs, face and neck in an attack at Northwest First Court and 14th Street. She described her assailant, and police found Williams in the area.

However, the aggravated battery charge was lessened to a misdemeanor.

In the same area a day later, another woman said Williams attacked her. The Miami police report said Williams "had his hand on her neck and was choking her while the victim was trying to get away."

The attacker ended up stealing \$25 from the victim.

Williams was arrested, but those charges were later dropped.

He was out on the streets in time to be accused of a mid-May attack in 1988.

### Choke hold used

building at 217 NW 8th St.

Police have never been able to find the man.

Witnesses were too high on drugs or alcohol to identify him, Watterson said.

Williams is suspected because he lived in the neighborhood at 921 NW Seventh Ave., the sergeant said.

Although an autopsy revealed bruises around her neck, medical examiners weren't able to detect trauma that would lead to Spires' death, Watterson said.

"There's no physical evidence," he said.

Today, Williams will be in court facing charges based on the com-

plaints of two women who told police Williams raped them in much the same way: He grabbed them from behind, choked them until they were unconscious and raped them in vacant areas.

Then he threatened to kill them if they told police.

Both identified Williams from photo lineups.

Prosecutor Dennis Siegel said Williams faces life in prison if convicted as charged of sexual battery with great force.

Three days before Williams was arrested and jailed without bail, the body of Peggy Gooden, the 17th woman to die mysteriously, was found at 9641 NW 27th Ave.

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
(305) 545-2400

CASE INFORMATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
mo. day yr.

time \_\_\_\_\_

M.E. Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Miami homicide Sgt. Thomas Watterson also noted that Williams could not have killed all the women because he was in jail when some of the 17 died.

Williams was profiled in 1986 in The Herald as a career criminal who knew how to beat the system. Although at that time he had been accused of rape by seven women and had been treated as a "mentally disordered sex offender" for a 1977 conviction, the rest of his cases had ended in acquittals or charges had been dropped or reduced.

"The alleged victims of Charles Henry Williams tell much the same story. The tall, baby-faced man begins with smiles and small talk, then suddenly turns vicious, chokes them and rapes them," according to the profile published Aug. 27, 1986.

"Each time Williams has been arrested," the story continued, "the 30-year-old bus mechanic with a soft voice and gentle manner offers the same explanation he will bring to court today. 'There was no rape. I'm going to beat this.'"

The day after the article, Williams plea-bargained on a sexual assault case to receive a 364-day jail sentence.

"He's very much a professional," said a Miami police detective who investigated one of the cases never prosecuted said in 1986. "He knows how to manipulate it. He knows what he can say and what he can't

**Attacker scared off**

A friend of the victim scared the man off. The victim later told police she thinks she would have been killed if her friend had not been there.

Within a few hours, just three blocks away, prostitute Erica Edwards, 24, died one of the 17 unexplained deaths.

Her body, naked above the waist, was found in a vacant field at Northwest 79th Street and Eighth Court. There were no signs of violence on her body.

Three other women died mysteriously in the area before Williams was arrested Oct. 28.

● Barbara Ann Black, 25, was found Oct. 24 in a front yard at 7310 NW 18th Ave.

● Barbara Lattimore was found at 2700 NW 87th St. Oct. 27.

● Robin Renee Rolle, 29, was discovered in an open field at Northwest 79th Street and 14th Court.

Metro police would not talk about any of these cases.

But Miami's Sgt. Watterson said Williams was a "good suspect" in the death of Anita Spires, who died Jan. 22.

Watterson said Spires' body was found after police raided an abandoned building for gambling and drugs. Spires was found dead five minutes after police noticed she was having sex with a man outside of the

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DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
mo. day yr.

time \_\_\_\_\_

M.E. Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Authorities still have not ruled out that many of the 17 women may have died from a combination of highs from sex and crack cocaine — although Medical Examiner Joseph Davis said last week that the pattern of the women's deaths indicates homicide.

### Sex offenders studied

Police have been scanning records to find convicted sexual offenders who raped in the inner city. Williams fits that description.

A Metro homicide sergeant recently theorized that the women may have suffocated from a penis forced down their mouths.

Forensic dentist Dr. Richard Souviron confirmed he had examined Williams' sexual organs about three weeks ago for bite marks and is trying to determine if there is any evidence that links him to the 17 deaths. Souviron and other medical examiners are also looking for signs of trauma or other traces that could determine if the women were slain.

Williams told Dade Stockade Lt. William Smith last Friday that he had been questioned about the deaths.

"He was worried about getting hurt if other inmates found out about it," Smith said.

The lieutenant said he could not allow a reporter to interview Williams until a public defender is appointed to represent him. The public defender's office said Williams should be assigned an attorney to day at the arraignment.

Metro detectives chief John Farrell, who has helped direct the investigation into the 17 women's deaths, was out of town and could not be reached for comment Monday. But he cautioned late last week that investigators were looking at several suspects and that his agency had no major suspect.

Tonya Folsom, a neighbor of Williams, said he grabbed her in a choke hold and dragged her to a bathroom where he cut her throat with a knife.

As in other cases where Williams had been accused of violence against women, he had been friendly, even offering Folsom some crack cocaine, she said in a deposition.

They smoked it in her boyfriend's upstairs apartment while he was at work and her baby was asleep in another room.

Williams left, but returned shortly afterward.

"I was like surprised to see him," Folsom said in the deposition.

"He grabbed me around the neck. From behind. I blanked out. The only thing I remember... I was trying to pull his arms but I couldn't."

The next thing she knew she was on the bathroom floor. "I saw the shadow of the knife," she testified in the deposition. "I remember him hitting me. I felt when he cut my throat. I jumped straight up."

Another man heard the sounds and scared the attacker off. Police later arrested Williams on attempted second-degree murder charges, but those charges were dropped.

So were charges brought against him last October by a woman who said he tried to kill her.

The police report said the victim was walking west on Northwest 80th Street from Seventh Avenue early Oct. 22 when she heard a male voice say, "Hey, lady, come over here."

"As she continued to walk, she heard footsteps behind her. When the victim turned around to see who was behind her, the defendant grabbed the victim from behind, placing her in a choke hold," the report said. "The defendant choked the victim until she was unconscious and then dragged her to nearby bushes."

# Coroner: Somebody killed 19 women

By ROSEMARY GOUDREAU  
Herald Staff Writer

On a second look, the Dade Medical Examiner's Office has found a common thread in the mysterious deaths of 19 young Miami women over the past 2½ years — murder.

Medical Examiner Joseph Davis personally re-examined autopsy reports and photographs of the women's bodies and released a report Tuesday that says someone applied pressure to the necks or mouths of many of the victims.

The six-page report does not mention the two unusual theories his department had offered to explain the deaths: that a small amount of cocaine combined with sexual intercourse killed them, or that the women choked to death during oral sex.

The women, all black except for one Hispanic, have been found dead since December 1986 in outside areas of Dade — open fields, behind buildings, in the bushes. All were found lying on their backs with their skirts

pulled up or their pants pulled down, their legs spread apart. All were found between downtown Miami and Northwest 102nd Street, except for one found in Hialeah.

Initially, the medical examiner's office said the bodies showed no sign of trauma — no bruises, no needle marks, no signs of a struggle. Only recently did they suggest the possibility that somebody was killing them.

The Davis report changes that.

"It is my considered conclusion that the re-

petitive pattern of body position, location and scene circumstances constitute a reasonable conclusion as to manner of death — homicide," Davis wrote.

Only nine of the women's bodies were found soon enough after death to allow detailed studies of the skin, but seven of them showed "subtle evidence" of "carefully ap-

PLEASE SEE SLAYINGS, 3B

## Examiner: Somebody killed 19 women

SLAYINGS, FROM 1B

plied neck pressure," Davis wrote.

Four of the nine showed "mild or moderate pressure to the mouth," he reported.

"It is not at all difficult to inflict enough neck pressure to result in helplessness and loss of consciousness within seconds," he wrote. "A weakened or unsuspecting victim may be fatally incapacitated with little or no residual signs of physical injury."

Davis did not return phone calls to his office Tuesday.

John Farrell, chief of detectives of the Metro-Dade Police Department, said his department is keeping "an open mind" about the deaths since no specific cause has been rendered. His department has always investigated the cases as though they were homicides, he said.

"There's a lot of this we don't understand and we don't have the answers," Farrell said. "Davis is saying, 'It's my feeling this is homicide, and I'm the boss.'"

"He's not saying that absolutely,

this is the way these women were killed. He's talking about subtle evidence. . . . Anything is possible, but you're not doing this in some clinical situation where the exact pressure points will be touched. These are live people, streetwise people. We have still not established a very specific manner of death," he said.

Farrell isn't ready to dismiss the theory that a small amount of cocaine combined with sexual stimulation killed some of the women. According to the theory, initially put forth by Deputy Dade Medical Examiner Charles Wetli, the combina-

tion can set off a fatal nervous reaction in run-down people who regularly abuse drugs.

"We certainly don't discount it totally at this point in time when we don't have other than 'subtle evidence' of injuries," Farrell said.

Still, the department continues to look for people with a history of beating up prostitutes or women around crack houses, he said. One of the homicide sergeants leaves today for the FBI Behavioral Profile bureau in Quantico, Va. The agency keeps a data base and has behavior analysts who might help investigators figure out the type of killer, or killers, they might be looking for.

Investigators have questioned convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams in with the deaths. Williams, held at the Dade County jail on unrelated rape charges, has a history of choking his victims to unconsciousness.

"The important thing is that the general public does not seem to be at risk here," said Farrell. "In most of these cases, it's associated with people in the crack-house environment. It doesn't make the death any less a death. It's important. But we don't want to alarm the public at large."

*Miami Herald*

5/31/89

# Cops: Rapist top suspect in murders

## But no charges filed in 19 deaths

By **DONNA GEHRKE**  
Herald Staff Writer

For the first time, Metro-Dade police confirmed Monday that convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams is the main suspect in some of the 19 inner-city murders of Dade women.

However, police still do not have enough evidence to charge Williams with any murders. "We've exhausted all leads," Homicide Bureau Cmdr. Wayne McCarthy said.

"It's not like anyone has left a calling card or footprint or anything like that," he added. "We're making every effort we can."

McCarthy said his investigators are looking at two other suspects. One is suspected of killing the first victim, Tammie Turner, who died in September 1986 while Williams was in jail. The other is a convicted sex offender, but McCarthy said his investigators are not investigating him as intensely as they are Wil-



**CHARLES WILLIAMS:** Police link him to some of 19 deaths.

liams. He would not disclose those suspects' names.

Investigators have said privately that Williams, 32, is their suspect for all the slayings but Turner's.

McCarthy said Williams "is a main suspect in some of them," adding he could speak only about the 11 cases his agency is investigating. Hialeah and Miami police detectives in charge of the others could not be reached for comment after McCarthy

PLEASE SEE SUSPECT, 2B

Miami Herald  
June 20, 1989

DATE  
mo. day yr

## Cops suspect rapist, lack evidence

### SUSPECT, FROM 1B

thy's afternoon press conference.

McCarthy said witnesses have linked Williams with four of Metro's victims.

"He knew them or he dated them," McCarthy said. "Or he did drugs with them."

Family and witnesses have also tied Williams to the Miami homicide of Sharmanita Grays, 16, a neighbor of Williams in Overtown.

Since Williams was jailed in early April on two unrelated rape charges, no woman has been found dead like the other victims.

Williams has denied involvement in any of the deaths.

McCarthy said police have not ruled out that some of the victims died accidentally. But he acknowledged that the theory the women died from a lethal combination of sex and cocaine — which has been rejected by Dade Medical Examiner Joseph Davis — is "on the back burner."

burner."

Davis said Monday it is only a matter of paper work before his office classifies all the women's deaths as homicides. Some of the deaths had remained unclassified for months before Davis led his own investigation and concluded all 19 victims were murdered.

In some cases, the women had been clearly asphyxiated, he said. "You could stand 10 feet away, it's that clear," he added. In others, the bodies were so decomposed that medical examiners couldn't determine an exact cause of death.

McCarthy said his office is waiting for a written report from the FBI's Behavioral Profile Bureau in Quantico, Va., which will take weeks to complete.

After a preliminary analysis, the bureau told local investigators that the 18 deaths, excluding Turner's, appear to be similar and committed by one person.

CASE INFORMATION

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
(305) 545-2400

M.E. Case #

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
Number One on Bob Hope Road, Miami, Florida 33136

TOXICOLOGY REPORT

TAYLOR, MELANIE

M.E. CASE NO. 87-2017

<u>SUBSTANCE</u>	<u>SPECIMEN</u>	<u>RESULT</u>
ETHANOL	BRAIN	0.15%
ETHANOL	HEART BLOOD	0.22%
ETHANOL	OCULAR FLUID	0.25%
COCAINE	BRAIN	0.10mg/Kg
COCAINE	NASAL SWABS	DETECTED
COCAINE	VAGINAL SWABS	UNDETECTED
COCAINE	HEART BLOOD	DETECTED <0.05mg/L
COCAINE	FOIL	DETECTED
COCAINE	ZIPLOC BAG	DETECTED
NORCOCAINE	ZIPLOC BAG	DETECTED
MORPHINE	HEART BLOOD	UNDETECTED
MORPHINE	OCULAR FLUID	UNDETECTED
CYANIDE	HEART BLOOD	UNDETECTED
DRUGS	POWDER	UNDETECTED

NEW  
ORIGINAL

*Bruce A. Hyma*  
Bruce A. Hyma, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner  
Date 5/17/89

*WLLH*

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name....TAYLOR,.Melanie....July.29,1987...9:15.AM..Case No. 87-2017

IDENTIFICATION:

The body is identified by Alphonzo Merritt, 1251 NW 61st St.#1, Miami 33147, 696-8887, stepfather, who has known the deceased since childhood.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The body is that of a 4 foot 10 inch, 123 pound adult black female. The scalp is atraumatic. The black 8 centimeter scalp hair is pulled together at the top of the head. Over the forehead above the right eye is a horizontal 1.8 centimeter scar. The bulbar and palpebral conjunctivae are free of petechiae. Radiating from the left corner of the mouth is a 1.7 centimeter horizontal scar. Inside the left lower lip is a superficial 0.6 centimeter laceration. Near the tip of the tongue is a 0.8 centimeter superficial laceration. The mouth contains native dentition in fair repair.

The external features of the neck are unremarkable except for post mortem insect activity. A 3 centimeter vertical scar is over the sternal notch.

In the left upper chest is a diagonal 4 centimeter scar. The breasts are unremarkable except for post mortem insect activity.

The abdomen is slightly distended and free of scars, lacerations or contusions. Multiple vertical stretch marks are over the right and left lower quadrants.

Over both upper extremities are multiple, slightly raised, hyperpigmented punctate nodules with depressed pearly white centers. These range from 2 to 3 millimeters in greatest dimension. Over the dorsal surface of the right wrist are multiple pinpoint abrasions which are associated with blood in the soft tissue beneath them. Over the dorsal surface of each hand are multiple oblique scars which average 2 centimeters in greatest dimension.

The back is unremarkable except for a 3 centimeter keloid near the waistline. The buttocks are unremarkable. The anus is free of contusions or lacerations.

The external genitalia are free of lacerations and contusions. The vagina is free of lacerations and contains creamy yellow-white fluid.



THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name....TAYLOR,.Melanie....July.29,1987...9:15.AM..Case No. 87-2017

Over the distal lower extremities are multiple, slightly raised, hyperpigmented, 0.2 centimeter nodules that have depressed pearly white centers. One of these lesions over the left ankle is centrally ulcerated. The lower extremities are otherwise free of edema, lacerations or contusions.

INTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The ribs and sternum are intact. The serosal cavities are unremarkable.

The 380 gram heart has a normal amount of epicardial fat. The right dominant coronary circulation is free of atherosclerosis and is widely patent. The myocardium is soft, red-brown and homogeneous. The valve cusps and leaflets are thin and pliable and free of vegetations. The pulmonary artery is free of atherosclerosis. The thoracic and abdominal aorta is free of atherosclerosis.

The right lung and left lung are 440 and 450 grams respectively. They both have smooth pleural surfaces. The bronchi contain bloody foamy fluid. The pulmonary parenchyma is edematous and congested. The pulmonary arteries are unremarkable.

The 1460 gram liver has a smooth capsule and a sharp anterior margin. The hepatic parenchyma is red-brown and homogeneous. The gallbladder is not distended and contains green-yellow bile. The porta hepatis is free of adenopathy.

The 90 gram spleen has a gray wrinkled capsule. The splenic pulp is dark red and semi-liquid.

Each kidney is 150 grams. They have smooth cortical surfaces and deeply congested parenchyma. The pelvocalyceal systems are unremarkable. The ureters are normal in course and caliber. The urinary bladder is unremarkable.

The uterus, tubes and ovaries are unremarkable. The cervical os is patulous and ulcerated.

The esophagus has a smooth tan, non ulcerated mucosa. The stomach has a smooth serosal surface. Gastric contents consist of approximately 20 cubic centimeters of red-brown turbid fluid. The gastric mucosa is unremarkable. The small and large bowel have smooth serosal surfaces and normal mucosa throughout. The pancreas has soft, red-brown parenchyma and an obscured lobular architecture.

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name....TAYLOR,.Melanie....July.29,1987...9:15.AM..Case No. 87-2017

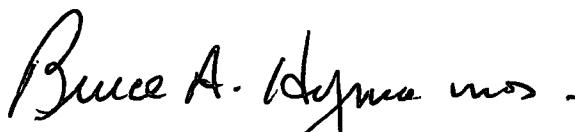
The adrenal glands have thin yellow friable cortices. The adrenal medullae are autolyzed.

The strap muscles of the neck are red-brown and homogeneous. The thyroid has a brown granular parenchyma and is free of nodules. The thyroid cartilage is intact. The larynx is free of petechiae. The hyoid bone is intact. The tongue is red-brown and homogeneous with a single superficial 0.8 centimeter laceration near the tip.

The calvarium and dura are intact. The 1200 gram brain has symmetric cerebral hemispheres with mild leptomenigeal congestion. The cerebellum, pons, and medulla oblongata are unremarkable. The cerebral hemispheres have no internal or external abnormality.

AUTOPSY FINDINGS:

1. Hemorrhagic pulmonary edema
2. Visceral congestion
3. Early decomposition

  
Bruce A. Hyma, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner

BAH:rf

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 8/12/87  
mo. day yr.

1:12 pm  
time

872019  
M.E. Case #

Microscopy

Heart - early autolysis - no contraction bands.

Kidney - early autolysis - architecture normal.

Lung - autolysis - architecture normal.

Liver - congestion of sinusoids.

Lymph node - autolyzed.  
porta hepatis.

Spleen - early autolysis otherwise unremarkable.

Skin - mixed inflammatory infiltrate around dermal appendages.  
no granulomas. Vascular degeneration of dermal collagen.

Biopsy no 8/12/87

Full body, female, anterior and posterior views.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

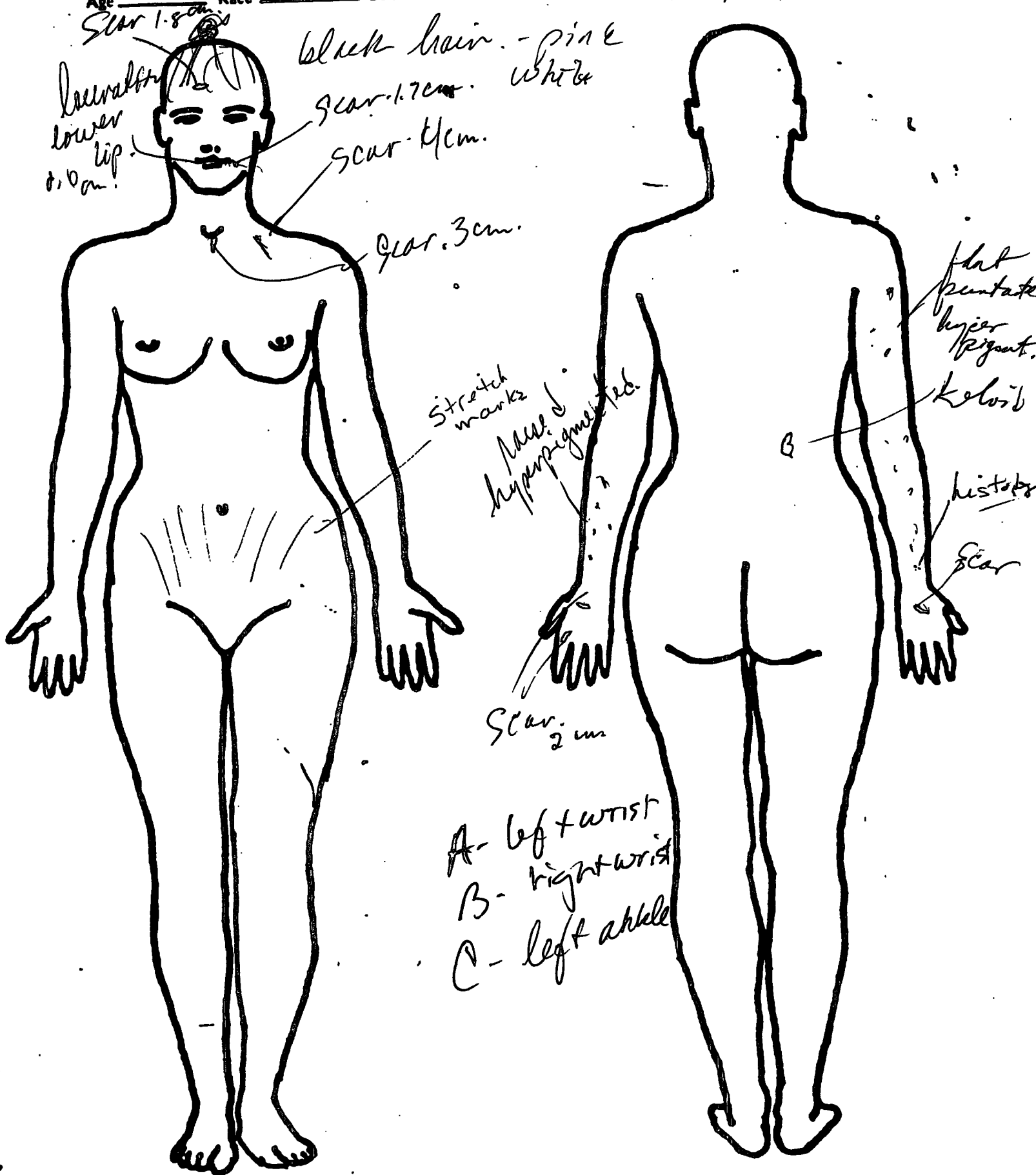
Autopsy No. 872017

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Race B

Sex F

Date 7/2/87.



6/18/89

D. McK

Green Shores was wrong

The incident did not, repeat  
not occur at time !!  
!! victim was found dead.!!

Correct this now!

go

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT

CLASSIFICATION OF PENDING CASE

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED BY A MEDICAL EXAMINER WHEN A PENDING CASE IS TO BE CLASSIFIED. MAKE CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN APPROVAL BY EITHER THE CHIEF OR DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER BEFORE COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMS AND CERTIFICATES REQUIRED BY THE STATE.)

M.E. Case # 87-2017

Name (if known) Taylor, Melanie

Cause of Death:  
(Item 24)

Asphyxia

Due to:

Due to:

Contributory Cause:

Manner of Death:  
(Item 27a)

Homicide July 28, 1987 unknown

How Incident Occurred:  
(Item 27d)

found semi nude with mouth and tongue injuries

Rationale for Classification:

1. Abused female
2. Seminate
3. Sexual abuse
4. Only found cocaine
5. Evidence of external mouth pressure
6. Epidemiological evidence - one of 19 study cases

\_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
M - D - Y  
Date

Approved by J. K. Davis

6/18/89  
M - D - Y  
Date

CASE REVIEW  
J. H. DAVIS, M.D.

NAME: Taylor, Melvin

ME No.: 87-2017

BA 14

Age/Race: 26 B

Police: Miami

Date Found: 7/28/87

Police No.: 2091499 L Vincent

Coordinates: NW 2 Ave 14 St.

Site Character: Porch - Abandoned house - Creek house Dry pump house

Position: Supine legs spread

Clothing/Cover: Nude blouse pulled up

Preservation Status: Good

Photos Eyes: 5

" Lips: Yes lower lip abnormal

" Ext. Neck: Yes Insects

" Int. Neck: 5

Cocaine Blood: < .05 w/b

" Other: Brown .10 w/b Alcohol + Powder +

Alcohol: .15 Brown .25 w/b H+ Blood .22 Trace Lead

Other Drug:

LONGWE  
POSITIVE

SOUVIKON +

EVIDENCE FOR  
HOMICIDE

Abandoned

Nude

Sex

Drugs C.H.S.D.H. + Cocaine

ACCIDENT

Cocaine hit low in  
blood < .05

.10 Brown

Position close to

Repetitive  
studies

# Master List - Study of 19 Cases

87-2017

## Already Classified as Homicide

- 1 88-3093 Black, B.
- 2 89-243 Spivey, A
- 3 89-906 Williams, A
- 4 89-997 Hernandez, B

## Well preserved - not decomposed bodies

- 1 87-2000 Samuels, W
- 2 87-2017 Taylor, M
- 3 87-2633 Rozier, E
- 4 88-1055 Gray, S
- 5 88-3075 Edwards, E
- 6 88-3119 Lathimory, B
- 7 88-3575 Burns, A
- 8 89-323 Stewart, L
- 9 89-981 Gooden, P

## Decomposed or insect altered bodies - including skeletons

- 1 86-2512 Turner, T
- 2 88-2596 Henderson, J
- 3 88-2637 Johnson, L
- 4 88-3118 Rolle, R
- 5 89-346 Harris, V
- 6 89-583 Bodie, C



THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name.....TAYLOR,.Melanie.....July.29,1987...9:15.AM..Case No. 87-2017

CAUSE OF DEATH:

Cocaine Toxicity

*See  
and  
J. P. Davis*

*Bruce A. Hyma*  
Bruce A. Hyma, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner

Date: 8/25/87

BAH:rf



## RELEASE OF CASE MATERIALS

Date 01 - 23 90  
Month Day Year

M.E. Case # 87-2017 Deceased Name Melanie Taylor

☐ Autopsy Report  
☐ Slide Duplication / Photo  
☒ 5 Pages  
☐ Verification of Death  
☐ Glass Micro Slides  
☐ Micro Slide Case

Release to (Receiving Party Please Print):

Name DONNA GEMRKE

Address Miami Herald

Signature of Receiving Party Donna Gemrke

Official Receipt # \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

Released By \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name



C.W. GRIFFIN / Miami Herald Staff

**LOST THEIR MOTHER:** One victim was Barbara Lattimore, who left daughters Shantavia, 3, left, and Shadedra, 6. Now their grandmother is trying to raise them on a meager income.

## 18 killings leave families struggling with uncertainty

By **DONNA GEHRKE**  
Herald Staff Writer

Fourteen-year-old Antoinette Burns jogged, earned a white belt in karate and went to movies.

Sharmanita Grays, 16, went out for cheerleading in junior high but later dropped out of school.

Barbara Lattimore, 22, had two young daughters and tried to care for them, despite her crack habit.

About the only thing the three had in common was murder.

They are among the 18 young Dade women who the FBI believes were slain by a serial killer who hated women.

After a preliminary analysis, the FBI's Behavioral Profile Bureau in Quantico, Va., has told local investi-

gators that the deaths appear to be similar and conducted by one person.

"No one wants to scare people, but we could have a serial killer," said Metro homicide Sgt. Frank Wsolowski, who heads the county's investigation.

Since main suspect Charles Henry Williams — a convicted rapist — was jailed in early April on two unrelated rape charges, no woman has been found dead like the other victims. Investigators say they do not have enough proof to charge him with even one homicide.

"We're still investigating everything," said Miami homicide detective Tony Rodriguez, who is in charge

PLEASE SEE MURDERS, 5B

# Homicide victims' families left in limbo

MURDERS, FROM 1B

of the Miami operation.

Williams has denied any involvement in the deaths. His lawyer, assistant public defender Steven Potolsky, also said he couldn't talk about the investigation.

Late last month, Dade Medical Examiner Joseph Davis re-examined autopsy reports and photographs of 19 women's bodies and concluded someone had applied pressure to the necks or mouths of many of the victims. He is reclassifying the deaths to homicide — if they hadn't been already.

Police do not believe one of those victims is linked with the 18 others. The September 1986 death of Tammy Turner offers few clues since her body was found decomposed. But investigators said the death scene appears slightly different from the rest. Also, Williams was in jail at the time of her death.

The 18 other victims, all black except for one Hispanic, have been found dead since July 1987 with their skirts pulled up or their pants pulled down. Almost all had their legs spread apart. All were found between downtown Miami and Northwest 102nd Street, except for one found in Hialeah.

Medical examiners still aren't sure exactly how the women died.

The uncertainty has added more agony for many of the victims' families.

The family of Sharmanita Grays had to wait more than a year before Davis reversed an assistant's decision that the teen-ager died from a dose of sex and cocaine.

When Sharmanita was found dead in April 1988, her family told Miami police they suspected murder. A sister, Harriette Grays, said they even had a suspect — Charles Henry Williams.



C.W. GRIFFIN / Miami Herald Staff

**WAITING FOR ANSWERS:** Learlean Rahming, mother of victim Antoinette Burns, can't file an insurance claim without a completed death certificate.

Sharmanita had been with Williams, a neighbor, the night she died at a Biscayne Boulevard motel. Two witnesses, a motel clerk and the 16-year-old's best friend, backed up the family's story.

"The police never did anything. They never came back," Harriette Grays said. "They act like they don't care. They don't tell my mama anything."

Detective Rodriguez said he could not discuss individual cases, but he defended the city investigations as thorough and aggressive.

Harriette said her family saw Williams roam freely throughout the

neighborhood after Sharmanita's death.

"He used to walk around here. I couldn't take it. I just left," she said. Sharmanita was her favorite sister.

She had been a junior high cheerleader who dropped out of school when she joined in with the wrong bunch of girls, Harriette Grays said.

"She was shaped nice, she jumped the best of the cheerleaders, she was a great dancer. She was a pretty black girl. A lot of people liked her," her sister remembered.

The family of victim Barbara "Rabbit" Lattimore also have suffered from waiting.



**YOUNGEST VICTIM:** Antoinette Burns' death was different.

They still have not received a completed death certificate, eight months after the 22-year-old woman was found dead at a closed drive-in movie theater at 2700 NW 87th St.

Missing from the form is a cause of death.

An insurance company is refusing to pay a claim until the cause is listed. That may be weeks more, said the victim's mother, Annie.

"The hardest part is trying to catch up on the funeral," she added. "It cost about \$3,000. Last month, we finished paying it off. But that threw us behind in our rent."

She said she also is struggling to

support Lattimore's daughters, ages 3 and 6, on an \$86-a-month welfare check the government provides for the two girls.

A social worker said the grandmother cannot receive more since she is already receiving a check for another daughter's six children.

Annie Lattimore said she relied on her daughter to help cook meals, clean house and tend the children. Even though her daughter was addicted to crack, she managed to be a great help, the mother added.

Now, she said, "it's hard on me."

Like many other parents, she believes her daughter was abducted. She was last seen getting into a car with a man.

Williams pops up in Lattimore's case as well.

He hung out at the same corner crack den where Lattimore went, said her sister Gail Griffin.

The sister, who called herself a friend of Williams, said he came over a couple of times to their home. She said she didn't know if Williams knew her sister.

Meanwhile, the family of the youngest victim, Antoinette Burns, is also waiting to receive a completed death certificate to collect insurance money.

She was last seen alive last Dec. 11 after she hitched a ride with a neighbor to go to the movies. She was let out near the Scott Projects. The next day, her body was found under a tree 26 blocks north.

"For a while, I was out there investigating myself," said her mother, Learlean Rahming. "I used to go out every morning from my house to Northwest 62nd Street where she disappeared. I tried to find the guy she knew. If anybody had seen her in the area. But nobody knows nothing."

Antoinette was a boy-crazy teenager who was trying to decide what school she wanted to attend, her mother said. Before she returned to her grandmother's Opa-locka home, she had been staying with an aunt in

a small town in Florida. Her family sent her there because she had been running with a bad pack of girls.

From the start, her family suspected foul play.

For weeks, they stubbornly fought off police and medical examiner's theories that Antoinette, along with many other victims, had died from a dose of crack cocaine and sex.

"I kept telling them that my child didn't do drugs," said Rahming. "But no one was listening to me."

"Walking to the bushes to have sex?" added Antoinette's grandmother, Thelma Rahming. "Not Antoinette. That sounds kind of strange."

At the funeral, they noticed that her lips were swollen "like somebody had hit her or something," Learlean said.

They also protested that Antoinette wasn't a convicted prostitute like some of the other victims.

Authorities started listening to the family when no cocaine was found in Antoinette.

That was the break some detectives needed to present their own theories that a killer was at work.

"It just didn't feel right," said Wesolowski, a veteran homicide investigator who leads a team of Metro detectives.

All the women's death scenes — many of them including torn clothing and missing shoes — pointed to homicide, he said.

"You get certain vibes when you look at different scenes," he said.

"It's like when you're approaching a drug suspect who's wearing designer jeans, a beeper and gold jewelry. You just know."

Last week, both the investigator and Antoinette's mother were interviewed for the nationally syndicated program *A Current Affair*.

Although they've never met, their hopes, to be spread throughout the nation in the episode, were the same. They want to end the mystery.

Nov. 6, 1989

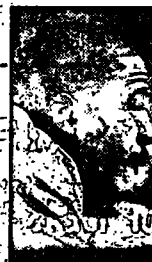
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## Suspect is linked to 19th slaying

By DONNA GEHRKE  
Herald Staff Writer

Charles Henry Williams, already the prime suspect in the slayings of 18 inner-city women, has been linked to the murder of another: a



20-year-old who, like three other victims, was seen with him on her last day alive.

Sandra Jackson, only four foot eight and 84 pounds, was alone with six-foot-three Williams, a convicted

rapist known for choking his victims, on March 23 after the two had visited with Jackson's cousin. Her body was found the next day in a wooded vacant lot at Northwest 13th Place and 38th Street.

Williams was one of the last individuals seen with her alive, said

PLEASE SEE WILLIAMS, 2B

# Convicted rapist linked to 19th slaying

WILLIAMS, FROM 1B

Tony Rodriguez, Miami homicide detective.

Like many of the 18 other victims, Jackson was found nude and asphyxiated in Northwest Dade, lying on her back with her legs spread.

Homicide detectives believe Williams, a baby-faced former maintenance worker, may be responsible for the 19 slayings — and perhaps more — because the methods of murder are strikingly similar.

"We've never had this many that seemed to fall into a pattern," said Dr. Joseph Davis, Dade's medical examiner.

Williams, 33, has been in the Dade County Jail for the past six months but has not been charged in any of the murders. He was charged with two counts of rape unrelated to the slayings. Metro and Miami homicide detectives say they don't have enough proof — even though he first murder came under investigation more than a year ago.

Williams has admitted to police that he knew some of the victims, but he has steadfastly denied killing anyone.

The slayings stopped once Williams was jailed in early April on the rape charges.

The first of the 19 victims — 18 of them black and one Hispanic — was found dead in July 1987.

Jackson was victim No. 15. The bodies of four other women were found before Williams was arrested in early April. Miami police did not disclose Jackson's connection to Williams and the other homicide victims until detectives recently gave depositions in court.

Jackson, a former cook in a sandwich shop, went by the name Sonia because she hated her given name. "She was my sweet baby," said her boyfriend Kirk Stevens, the father of her 2-year-old son, also named Kirk.

Like many of the other 18 victims, Jackson was a drug addict "doing tricks for crack," her family told investigators.

Just before her murder, she was desperately trying to break her

crack habit, said Vincent Lawrence, a distant relative who unsuccessfully tried to find a rehabilitation program for her. "I couldn't find anything free for her," he said.

On March 24, a man working in his yard found Jackson's strangled body next door in an overgrown lot in the Brownsville neighborhood. A brown coat covered her nude body. Her shoes were found nearby.

In the next 11 days, four more bodies of women were found. Two of them had been badly beaten and strangled, as Jackson was.

On March 26, the body of Angela Williams, 23, was found in an open field at Northwest 21st Avenue and 68th Street. The killer had beaten her face, breaking her jaw and teeth.

A week later, in another vacant lot at Northwest 23rd Avenue and 46th Street, children found the body of Brenda Hernandez, 24, whose chest and neck were battered like Jackson's.

Williams was picked up near the Hernandez murder site by homicide detectives a day after the body was found.

As in Jackson's case, witnesses saw Williams with Hernandez on the last day of her life.

Jailers later found scratches on Williams' back and fresh bite marks on his penis.

Metro homicide detective Joseph McMahon said Williams readily talked to homicide detectives.

Investigators said Williams told them he had been with some of the victims — but they were alive when he left them.

He said people in the neighborhood who say he is the murderer are picking on him. They didn't like him, Williams complained.

From canvassing Brownsville after the murders, police found at least two women who said they had survived attacks by Williams. The investigators and the alleged victims described the attacks in recent depositions.

One, an admitted prostitute, told McMahon that she had been raped and choked to unconsciousness in March by a man known on the streets as "Bumper" or "Bump."

McMahon showed her a Polaroid of Williams.

That's him, she said.

She said she hadn't gone to police sooner because she didn't think officers "give a damn about street hookers or prostitutes," McMahon said in a deposition.

The second victim said she was raped by Williams in the Brownsville neighborhood on March 18, six days before Jackson's body was found.

"She said at first he had grabbed her in a choke hold, putting his arm around her neck," Miami homicide detective Frank Castillo said in a deposition. "She said that he had her under control." She couldn't get away from him. The harder she would try to push away, the tighter the choke would get around her neck.

The two women pressed rape charges against Williams. He is scheduled to go to trial Nov. 13. But the trial is likely to be postponed for a third time, Prosecutor Dennis Siegel is planning to be out of the state that week to attend a seminar.

Meanwhile, police remain close-mouthed about the homicide investigation.

Williams' defense attorney, Howard Landau, believes homicide in-

vestigators are now conducting genetic DNA tests to see if they can trace back to Williams any body fluids found on the victims. The tests are usually done to connect rapists to their victims, usually through semen.

Despite Landau's objections, the Dade state attorney's office recently obtained a court order to take blood and saliva samples from Williams.

Miami homicide detective Rodriguez wouldn't talk about the genetic tests. "We're following up every avenue that's available to us that can assist us in these investigations," he said.

Rodriguez and John Farrell, Metro chief of detectives, said officers have pursued dozens of leads without the breakthrough they were counting on.

"Unfortunately, we haven't been able to put together anything of significance," Rodriguez said. "It's just a shame. It's a tragedy. I really feel that somebody out there saw or heard something that could help us solve at least one of these cases."

"Serial killers don't stop killing," he said. "They either get arrested, they die or they move somewhere and continue."